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Special Situation
Group 11-2 7 June 82
25X1Talking Points For the DCI on Lebanon and Israel
(Situation as of 1200 EDT)

- I. The extent of the Israeli advance in southern Lebanon is not yet clear. The advance continues along the three main axes established yesterday.
 1. North along the coast through Tyre apparently some Israeli units have turned east from Tyre and are heading toward the Iron Triangle in the heart of the UNIFIL area. They will presumably try to link up with Israeli units moving northwest from the Haddad enclave.
 2. A pincer movement to encircle PLO units in An Nabatiyah.
 3. A second pincer movement in the east to encircle PLO units in the Hasbayya area.

It appears that the Israelis have completed the encirclement of Hasbayya and An Nabatiyah and have advanced north of Tyre an undetermined distance.

There have apparently been extensive Israeli amphibious landings along the Lebanese coast, probably at the mouth of the Zahrani River as well north of Sidon on the Awwali River.

A. Syrian Intentions:

There have been several reports of limited air and ground clashes between Syrian and Israeli forces. A Syrian antitank battalion probably north of Hasbayya clashed briefly with Israeli forces before fleeing. Israeli aircraft apparently clashed with Syrian MIGS in the late afternoon, claiming a hit.

The 91st brigade of the Syrian 1st Armored Division has moved into the Bekaa Valley, and the remaining two brigades of the division, one armored, (2,500 men) one mechanized, (3,500 men) have moved toward Lebanon

[REDACTED] One SA-6 battalion of at least four launchers has also moved toward Lebanon but we do not yet know where it will deploy.

[REDACTED] report that Syria has no intention of engaging the Israelis in Lebanon, and the limited clashes so far could be merely a demonstration of support for the PLO. The reinforcement of the Bekaa Valley is probably precautionary in view of Syrian fears of an Israeli attack on the Bekaa.

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B. Israeli Military Options:

In order to achieve their stated objectives of clearing the PLO forces out of the area within 40km of the Israeli border, Israeli forces would have to control southern Lebanon up to the town of Az Zahrani.

To accomplish this, Israeli forces would have to move north along the coast from Tyre and west from An Nabatiyah along the Zahrani River. Palestinian resistance in the Hasbayya area and the PLO stronghold of An Nabatiyah and Tyre could be overcome subsequently.

The amphibious landings north and south of Sidon are probably intended to cut the PLO supply routes from Beirut to the south. If the Israelis were to attempt to extend their control as far north as Sidon they would have to add at least another brigade to the three reinforced brigades (about 12,000 men) already committed to the operation

II. Israeli Political Strategy/Aims

Until Israeli military objectives are achieved, Begin's paramount political concern will be to deflect pressure for a premature ceasefire.

Three other considerations.

- A. Most important element for Begin is to minimize adverse US reaction, keep military and economic aid flowing, political dialogue going.
 - Will likely launch major propaganda campaign to persuade Administration, Congress, and public opinion that Israel had no choice.
 - Will want to keep late June visit to US on schedule.
 - Will likely ask US to take steps on Israel's behalf such as intervening with European allies to keep criticism to a minimum, not impose any sanctions/embargos
- B. Another major part of strategy is to keep Syrian ground forces out of fighting in south and from attacking Israeli-backed Christian Phalange in central Lebanon.
 - Have refrained from attacking Syrian SAMs in Bekaa Valley

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1. Begin probably worried that Syrian army involvement would greatly escalate fighting, lead to heavy casualties, draw from fight against Palestinians.
2. Probably is also mindful that Syrian ground force involvement/destruction of SAMs would increase threat of Soviet intervention.

-- Probably fears this might trigger massive US effort to restrain Israel, force it to give up military gains.

Nevertheless, if Syrian Army attacks Begin will respond vigorously, not pull in his horns.

C. Begin wants to maintain broad-based domestic support

-- Opposition leader Peres supports attack.

Domestic support probably would begin to crack if Israeli attack bogs down, casualties and prisoners mount. Therefore Begin counting on quick military victory with minimum ~~NOF~~ casualties to minimize negative domestic and US reaction, keep Syrians out of fighting, preempt serious Egyptian reaction.

D. Begin almost certainly has concluded that some Israeli forces must remain in Lebanon, will also use Christian allies--Haddad and some Phalange--to help maintain order, keep Palestinians north of Zahrani River.

-- Goal is to keep Palestinian artillery out of range of northern Israel.

-- Begin does not believe UN or Lebanese Government willing or able to do this, although may agree to accept some UN or Lebanese Government presence in the area.

-- Israelis can be expected to adopt tough negotiating stance, insisting that they cannot withdraw from Lebanon unless Syrians also leave and firm international guarantees are gained that more effectively control Palestinian armed presence in Lebanon.

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